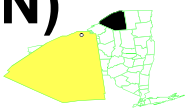
GENERAL MOTORS (CENTRAL FOUNDRY DIVISION)
NEW YORK
EPA ID# NYD091972554



EPA REGION 2
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 24
St. Lawrence County
Massena

Other Names:
G.M. Massena

Site Description

The 270-acre site is bordered by the St. Lawrence River, the St. Regis Mohawk Nation, the Raquette River, and the Reynolds Metals Company. There are approximately 4,000 Saint Regis Mohawks (the "Tribe") living in the adjacent territory referred to as Akwesasne. The City of Cornwall, Ontario, with approximately 50,000 residents, is 2 miles north across the river, and the Village of Massena, with a population of 13,000, is located 7 miles to the east.

The facility was originally built to produce aluminum cylinder heads for the Chevrolet Corvair and has been in operation since 1958. From 1959 to 1974, the plant used polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) as a component of the hydraulic fluids in its die casting process. Although General Motors (GM) no longer uses die casting in its processes, it continues to manufacture engine blocks at the Massena plant.

The site consists of several discrete areas—a twelve-acre Industrial Landfill, the North Disposal Area, the East Disposal Area, and four industrial lagoons. PCB-contaminated sludges from the plant's waste stream collected in the bottoms of several wastewater treatment lagoons and were also disposed of in the North Disposal Area and the East Disposal Area. The Industrial Landfill was used for the disposal of contaminated soils and solid industrial wastes. PCB contamination is also present in soils on the facility and in sediments in both the St. Lawrence and Raquette Rivers. The ground water beneath the site is contaminated with PCBs and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through federal and potentially responsible party's actions.

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 09/01/83
Final Date: 09/01/84

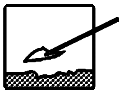
Threats and Contaminants

PCBs have been found in the ground water, on- and off-site soils, and sediment samples from the St. Lawrence and Raquette Rivers. VOCs were found in the ground water directly under the site and in off-site areas. Phenols have been detected in lagoon sludges as well as in the disposal areas. The consumption of fish or wildlife from contaminated areas is of special concern because of the proximity of the Mohawk Indian Reservation. Fishing remains restricted by the New York State Health Department and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. Individuals ingesting fish form the St. Lawrence River or ingesting contaminated surface water, ground water, soil, sludges, or sediments are potentially at risk. Public water supply systems are not contaminated.

Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in three stages: immediate actions and two long-term remedial phases. The first remedial phase is focusing on the cleanup of river-system sediments, the North Disposal Area, the Industrial Lagoons, Reservation and facility soils, and ground water; the second remedial phase is focusing on the cleanup of the Industrial Landfill and East Disposal Area.

Response Action Status



Immediate Actions: GM, under EPA's oversight, agreed to place a cap on the Industrial Landfill in 1987 to prevent the migration of contaminants from the landfill.

River Sediments, North Disposal Area, Industrial Lagoons, Soils, and Ground Water: The remedy related to the first long-term remedial phase that was selected by EPA in a December 1990 Record of Decision (ROD) includes dredging and excavating contaminated materials followed by on-site treatment and disposal of residual contamination, and ground water extraction and treatment. This decision was later amended to allow for the off-site disposal, rather than on-site treatment, of certain remediation wastes.

GM completed dredging of contaminated St. Lawrence River sediments in the Fall of 1995, effectively removing 23,000 tons of PCB-contaminated sediments from the St. Lawrence River; however, cleanup goals were not reached in all targeted areas. A multilayer cap was placed over those sediments. The dredged sediments were later shipped by rail car to a hazardous-waste disposal facility.

During 2000, GM began remediation of two inactive lagoons at the facility. All contaminated sludges (totaling approximately 1,500 tons) and the majority of the surrounding contaminated soils (approximately 10,000 tons) were excavated from the 1.5-million-gallon lagoon area, treated on-site, and shipped off-site for disposal. The remaining contaminated soils surrounding the 1.5-million-gallon lagoon are currently being addressed. Work related to the removal of contaminated sludges and soils associated with the 350,000-gallon lagoon was completed by GM in Fall 2003. GM also completed work on the Raquette River area by cleaning and plugging a storm sewer which had been a conduit of PCB-contaminated sediments to the Raquette River. Efforts related to the cleanup of contaminated sediments and soils on the banks of the Raquette River was completed in Fall 2003. This work will be followed

by additional sampling of the sediments in the Raquette River. Any sediments of concern will be addressed during the 2004 field season.

The first phase of the installation of the ground water collection and treatment system have begun. These efforts were related to the excavation of contaminated soils at the foot of the Industrial Landfill; this work was completed in Fall 2003.

The remediation of contaminated soils and sediments on St. Regis Mohawk Tribal lands has been delayed due to the denial of access to Tribal property.

The ground water remedial design is currently underway. It is anticipated that the design will be completed in mid-2004.

Industrial Landfill and East Disposal Area: The remedy related to the second long-term remedial phase was selected by EPA in 1992 and includes excavating highly-contaminated materials from the East Disposal Area followed by on-site treatment and disposal of residual contamination, capping the Industrial Landfill and less contaminated material in the East Disposal Area, and ground water containment. GM began the engineering design of this remedy in the Summer of 1992. There is strong public opposition to the containment remedy. Discussions with the Tribe, the community, and GM continue.

Site Facts: EPA and GM negotiated a Consent Order in 1985, requiring GM to conduct an investigation into the nature and extent of contamination at the site. In March 1992, EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order to GM requiring GM to undertake design and implementation of the final remedy for the North Disposal Area, river sediments, lagoons, soils, and ground water. In August 1992, EPA issued a second Unilateral Administrative Order to GM requiring GM to undertake design and implementation of the final remedy for the East Disposal Area and Industrial Landfill. GM is currently in compliance with both Orders.

In 1994, GM requested that EPA re-evaluate the amount of treatment required for the North Disposal Area, river sediments, lagoons, and soils. EPA reviewed the data provided by GM to determine whether material in these areas could be contained, rather than treated. In July 1995, EPA released a Proposed Plan which proposed a change in the treatment threshold for the excavated PCB-contaminated soils and sediments. Due to overwhelming public opposition, EPA withdrew that Proposed Plan and in September 1998 issued a revised Proposed Plan to allow for off-site disposal rather than treatment of these materials. That Proposed Plan, which was supported by the public, Tribe, and NYSDEC was formalized into a ROD amendment in March 1999. An Explanation of Significant Differences was issued in April 2000 allowing for the off-site disposal of certain materials after on-site treatment via stabilization, rather than thermal desorption.

Cleanup Progress

(Threat Mitigated by Physical Clean Up Work; Construction of the Long-Term Remedies Underway)

By capping the 297,000 tons of PCB-contaminated wastes in the Industrial Landfill, the potential for further contamination of the GM site and risk from exposure to hazardous materials has been reduced

while additional cleanup activities are being implemented. By dredging 23,000 tons of PCB-contaminated sediments from the St. Lawrence River system, the potential for continued contamination of edible fish and wildlife is reduced. The removal of contaminated sludges and soils from the on-site lagoons has further reduced the potential for exposure to contaminants.

Site Repositories

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Community Building, Hogansburg, NY 13655

Massena Public Library, 41 Glen Street, Massena, NY 13662

EPA Region II Superfund Records Center, 290 Broadway, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866